Hellenistic Astrology

The Living Signs

part 1: introducing the Zoidia

The broad river of Modern Western Astrology has evolved over the centuries, incorporating a variety of tributories, from sources as diverse as the Babylonians, the Egyptians, Greeks, Indians and Arabs. Steven Birchfield, an astrologer and philosopher, has been writing a series for us on Hellenistic Astrology, the underlying basis of our system. This section begins his fascinating exploration of the Living Signs...

This essay has been a rather ambitious project I've been working on for several months and it appears it may be a while longer before it is completely finished. However I wanted to begin publishing it in the individual parts as I feel comfortable with the results. So what is now available is pretty much finished and as I finish the other sections I will be including them.

I wanted to discuss the 'Signs' on perhaps a little different level in this essay. We are all used to seeing a lot of interpretations of the 'Sun in the Signs' or the Moon or the other planets in the Signs. You don't hear much about the signs themselves. In fact it is pretty consistent that when the 'signs' are discussed as a subject themselves, we find the traditional descriptions most prevalent where their elemental nature, mode of action, physical attributes, etc. are described. A very typical example of this is Lilly's teachings of the signs, which are quite consistent with and well preserving of the earlier tradition.

There is another side however that appears with remarkable consistency throughout the major early writers, a side that has perhaps fallen off a bit into obscurity and ambiguity. In order to understand this side we will have to go back a ways in our astrological history and try to regain just what the early Hellenistic astrologers meant when they used the term we call 'signs'.

The Zoidia

The word we use today to relate to the constellations that make up our zodiac really falls short of the original Greek meaning. We call them 'signs' and if you say 'sign' to the average person, they have conjured in their minds things like billboards, or something physical or even a gesture that is used to convey an idea or message. The hearing impaired use a 'sign language' and when they are communicating to one another it is called 'signing'. Our English word originates from the Latin word signum and besides it's normal connotation it also has a secondary meaning of 'image' like in artwork, or a statue or picture. But most people when looking at a beautiful Rembrandt don't stand and gush, "oh what a beautiful sign", do they? As a matter of fact in our English language the only time we refer to a picture when using the word sign is when we speak of the constellations and the pictures and images associated with them. And in this sense of 'image' then the word is an approximate equivalent to the Greek word Zoidion, which also has a sense of the meaning of 'image'.

The only way I can really explain it is to break down the Greek word zoidion. Zoidion is formed from the root word zoion. Zoe meant 'life' and the ion was used as a locative and/or a diminutive (that means it placed the root somewhere and/or gave a definition of size). Thus a zoion was a 'place for life' and/or a 'little life'. We preserve the sense of this in our saying that "the body is the seat of the soul" or "the temple of the spirit". The Greeks were famous for their temples, such as the Olympion, which was the dwelling place for the divinity of the Olympian Zeus. That however does not make the definition any simpler.

Perhaps if we catalogue the uses of this word we find in Greek literature we can come to a better understanding. Robert Schmidt in the Translators Preface of the 1st book of ValensAnthology takes the time to catalogue for us many of the references to the word zoion found in Greek literature.

> •In Plato's Epinomis, the Athenian stranger defines for us that a zoion results "whenever a single copulative union of soul and body should give birth to a single shape" [981 a 7-9]
> •A little further in the same dialogue, the gods, who are likewise characterised as zoia, are identified with the stars. The stars are "either the gods themselves, or else images [zoia] of the gods created by the gods themselves." [983 e 5-6]
> •In Plato's Phaedrus, Socrates characterises paintings [zoia] as the "offspring of the painter's art that stand before one as though alive." [275 d 5]

In all of these usages there is the clear inference that the zoia in each case, result from something 'higher' and more 'real'.

"A picture is not a zoion-image because it is an image of some subject or some scene. It is an image because it reflects or 'images' the artist's soul - - or at least something that exists in the artist's soul."

Taken to another level,

"...in Plato's **Timaeus**, the Demiurge creates the world itself as a zoion, a living being. But this living being is also created in the image of the 'Idea of a Living Being'. This is not so much an abstraction of thought as it is a more fully real prototype of all living things!" [1]

Not only in Greek philosophy do we find this concept, but also if we examine closely in the Bible a human life is a zoion! It is the result of a copulative union of soul and flesh. "So God created man in his own image [a zoion], in the image of God created he him; male and female" [Genesis 2:27]. In other words we could just as well regard human life as the "offspring of the painter's art that stand before one as though alive"

It is doubtful then that the Greeks would only consider the picture or image character of the "signs" of the zodiac as just mere human projections of men and animals into the sky. But rather they were living images; they were divine artwork, the creations of a 'higher' source which, had a 'life' of their own.

In certain quarters of modern astrology we find a re-awakening of this concept, and none so clearly as in Jungian Archetypal astrology.

"I dare say that we shall one day discover in astrology a good deal of knowledge that has been intuitively projected into the heavens. For instance, it appears that the signs of the zodiac are character pictures, in other words libido symbols which depict the typical qualities of the libido at a given moment."

— Carl Jung in a personal letter to Freud

In simpler terms, the creation of the libido symbols [zoia] is the result of the psychic energy of the 'collective unconsciousness' being projected into the heavens. A good friend and colleague, Anthony Peña related to me that,

"Nothing could have been further from Jung's thought [vis. The mere human projections of men and animals into the sky] in regard to living, active symbols of the unconscious. Whenever Jung discusses the concept of "psychological projections" - it has significantly more import, serious intent, and

"meaning" than the average person will allow for. With Jung, "projections" of the psyche are never taken "lightly" and/or treated as a matter of "just" imagination and/or "just" psychological projections. For Jung, "projection" was a natural function of psyche that served as a vehicle into the very depths of the soul and into the healing of the soul."

Now it is interesting from both these perspectives of virtually the same idea that the Greeks could not clearly define this 'higher reality' any more than Jung could define his "unconscious".

"Fate, what the Greeks called Moira, ... takes as its province what is generally regarded as contingent or accidental – matters that were excluded from serious philosophical consideration by the Athenian philosophers themselves as being ultimately unintelligible." [2]

"...the Self is a borderline concept, which I call a symbol because it expresses something we cannot express otherwise, because we simply don't understand it. The idea of the Self is really unknown ground. The psychological definition is that the Self is the totality of consciousness and unconsciousness, and that sounds pretty definite, we seem to know what consciousness is and to have a fairly clear idea about the unconscious. But to say we know the unconscious is going too far; we only know of it.... A concept that contains a definite factor like consciousness and an indefinite factor like unconsciousness is not scientific.... it is metaphysical in its nature per definition: it overreaches itself." [3]

I think however I will leave the philosophical controversies that exist between these areas of thought for another time and another place. The main purpose of this essay is to emphasise the living quality of the zoidia, which is the relevant part of this discussion regardless of whether one leans toward the modern or classical.

Much of the significance of the zoidia, [I will use the word zoidia or zoidion in place of 'sign' throughout the rest of this text], has slowly diminished and been relegated to a place, like an inanimate building, to where they are only domiciles like a house with descriptive qualities that are totally void of life and define only to the extent that we might say a house has a certain shape to it's roof or the windows are so and so big and that it keeps the weather off your head. It is only the shell for another force, which is the actual life within the house, the planets. But I cannot believe for one moment that it was possible for the earlier astrologers to have used this language without being ever conscious of the deeper significance presented in the word, zoidion. And if one examines closely the written record from Valens to Al-Biruni, one will discover an underlying concept, which while unspoken, is certainly visible in the type of astrology and approaches to actual usage.

A Cosmic Eco-system

In recent years we have been made increasingly aware of the system of balances that exist in our environment: global warming, deforestation, pollution and the slow death of our oceans and water masses have awakened in us the need to understand just how interactive each level of life is on the total environment. From the lowliest plankton to the highest in the food chain there is an intricate 'life-role' played out.

The apostle Paul was probably well versed in the Greek philosophy concerning this intricate working of each level and the 'life-roles' in nature, as he relates this idea when he writes,

"And there are differences of administrations [roles or ministries], but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations... For the body is not one member but many... And if they were all one

member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body... much more, those members of the body which seem to be more feeble, are necessary."

I Corinthians 12 KJV

In like manner, our early forbearers understood that each part of the zodiac was a 'life-role' played out; each different and each necessary. We've seen the creation was a zoidion, the stars were zoia, and the signs were zoidia. And just as our environment is the product of the quality of each level of 'life' so is the individual a product of the quality of each level of 'life' found in the individual zodiac.

This is the point of this essay, to regain a proper perspective of the level of 'life' represented by the zoidia: to take them from an inactive and perhaps a bit neglected significance and put them back in their proper place in the Cosmic eco-system. I'm sorry to "wax philosophically" here but in order to understand what the Greeks meant; you have to understand this quality of the zoidia.
The zoidia had a 'life' of their own and as such they could and do have relations with each other. And because the signs were the domiciles of the planets (who were also zoia) then the planets could have a relationship and dealings with each other. Al Biruni illustrates this relationship when he says,

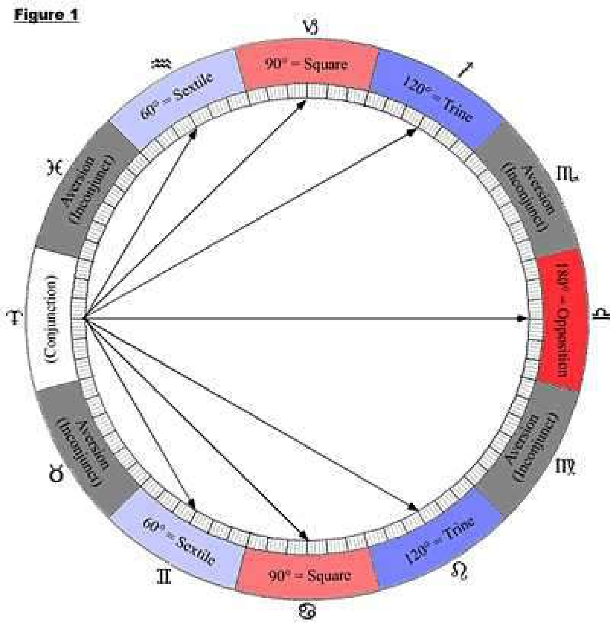
"Whenever two planets are in **signs which are in aspect to each other**, they [the planets] also are said to be in aspect;" [emphasis is mine - SB] [4]

We find within this statement an inference of inter-dependence that because of this, what I will call, 'living' familiarity between the zoidia then there exists a 'living' familiarity between the planets. In fact in several authors, including Ptolemy, there are great pains taken and several chapters devoted before all else, to the 'living' qualities of the zoidia.

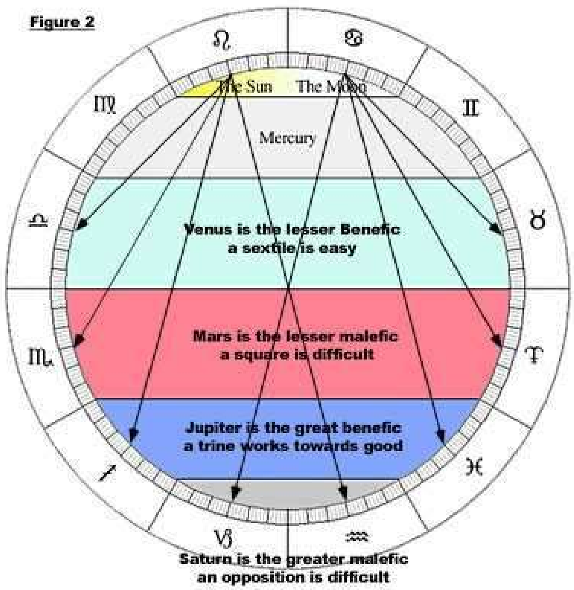
Aspects were the sense of sight to the zoidia. In fact the word "aspect" comes from the Greek word "to look". The different types of glances the zoidia have towards each other are the same in all respects that a person would make. Psychologically we make a distinction between things that we see (which is a passive action) and things that we perceive or behold (when something "catches your eye" and we consciously receive an impression). Similarly, thezoidia made distinctions in how they looked or saw ahead in the order of the Zodiac while they perceived those following them. In Medieval astrology seeing ahead became known as 'sinister' and perceiving behind as 'dexter'.

Curtis Manwaring gives a simple and precise explanation of this aspect of 'seeing'. [See figure 1]

"What determines the signs seeing and perceiving is the angle between the signs. The angles must be perfect divisions of a circle until 7 rays (one representing each of the visible planets) are fulfilled, and it also must be divisible by 30 degrees with no remainder (because a whole zoidion sees or perceives, not a part of it). First we divide the zodiac circle into 2 equal portions. We get half a circle or 180 degrees. This represents the opposition and first ray. Then we divide it into 3 equal portions and we get a trine, which is 120 degrees. This forms the 2nd and 3rd rays because the sign looks forward and perceives behind. Then we divide it into 4 equal portions and we get 90 degrees each, which each forms a square ray. Since the opposition is already accounted for, we have the addition of the 4th and 5th rays 90 degrees forward and backward in the order of the signs. When we divide by 5 we get 72 degrees, but it is not divisible by 30, so it is not an aspect. When we divide by 6 we get the hexagon (or sextile) of six equal portions of 60 degrees. Since the 2 trines and opposition have been accounted for, we have the 6th and 7th rays, both ahead and behind in the order of the signs." [5]



The relative strength of this 'seeing' aspect, or the strength of the relationship, was also based on a simple relationship of familiarity. From Leo to Capricorn was the 'diurnal' half, as the Sun is the diurnal sect Lord and from Cancer to Aquarius was 'nocturnal' because the Moon was the nocturnal sect Lord. Leo looked forward to Libra and Cancer perceived Taurus. The aspect, being made through three signs, was a sextile ray of the benefic nature of the common ruler to Libra and Taurus: Venus. So the sextile was profitable. The look forward from Leo to Scorpio was similar in nature to the Moon's perception back to Aries: a square, which was of the nature of Mars, the ruler of Scorpio and Aries—difficult. The ray forward from Leo to Sagittarius and from the Moon to Pisces were similar and of the nature of Jupiter, a trine and very beneficial. And finally the ray from Leo to Aquarius was the same as the ray from the Moon to Capricorn, an opposition and of the nature of Saturn. [See figure 2]



Of course there is an order and geometry to the Greek concept. Ibn-Ezra in his Book of Reasons, gives us a unique perspective as to the harmonics involved in the Hellenistic model—but it was not necessarily just the geometry that decided it or made the rules by which it applied. It was not just an

applied science that determined how the aspects were formed, but also a quality of life through 'familiar' relationships, which the mathematical concept supports and gives testimony to.

What a zoidion sees or perceives, just like with us, is dependent upon its position in respect to the other zoidia. When we look straight ahead at an object, what happens? You see that object, but the things which are immediately on either side fall out of perspective. Extreme cases of this are called "tunnel vision". As I am writing this I am looking straight ahead at my screen and that is where my attention is focused. I have a coffee cup standing on my desk next to my screen, but although it's in my field of vision it falls out of perspective. In order to 'perceive' that cup I have to shift my eyes and attention. If Aries looks at Libra then the immediate zoidia on either side of Libra fall out of our perspective. The object of focus is Libra, the opposition, while the zoidia Scorpio and Virgo, are no longer in the field of perception. These two zoidia then were in "aversion" to Aries, or what we know as inconjunct. Likewise again looking straight ahead from Aries, our vision does not cover a full 180 degrees or what we call peripheral vision, and neither could the zoidia. They could not see or perceive those zoidia that were immediately beside them. So Aries could not see or perceive Taurus or Pisces, or what we call the semi-sextile.

"The two signs, which are each side of the one (sign) in question and their opposites, viz. the second and twelfth and the sixth and eighth are not in aspect and are known as inconjunct." [6]

"The signs that have no aspect between them nor [are they of the same element] nature are four – the 2nd, the 6th, the 8th and the 12th. The weakest among them are the 6th and the 12th.[7]Some of the signs have enmity by aspect yet friendship in another way, either because they have the same ascension [time], or same strength, or by ecliptical position." [8]

"The position of the zoidia unconnected to one another has the numerical interval from 2, 6, 8, 12, and the zoidia taken in such intervals are also called averse to one another. And so the stars found in these zoidia become inharmonious. And sometimes they bring about hostile conditions, sometimes separations and banishments when such a condition has befallen all, whether by parents to children, by brothers, by man and wife, by fellowship, or by slaves and masters, and all resembling these." [9]

Good Vision Made Better

Being able to see each other by aspect, the perception of the zoidia could be strengthened through also having a sense of familiarity with others. This kind of 'looking' or 'perceiving' was based on being equal distances from the two solstice signs of Cancer and Capricorn. They could see and perceive each other because of equal authority, based on the fact that they are the same height with respect to the celestial equator and because their diurnal arcs[10] were equal in length. [See figure 3]

Figure 3

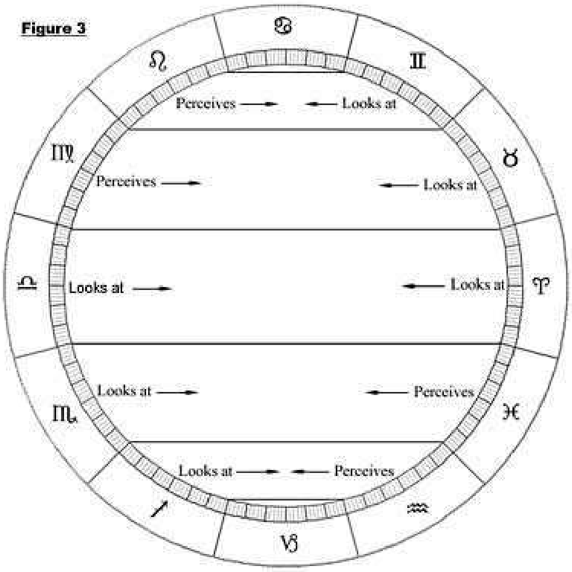


Table 1 [11]

Sign	♈	♉	♊	♋	♌	♍	♎	♏	♐	♑	♒	♓
Diurnal Arc	180°	200°	212°	216°	212°	200°	180°	160°	148°	144°	148°	160°

By examining Table 1 and looking at figure 3, we can see that Gemini and Leo are first, equally placed above the celestial equator. And in the table we see that Gemini has a diurnal arc of 212° and Leo also has 212°. Ptolemy tells us that,

"Any two signs, equally distant from either tropical sign, are equal to each other in power; because the Sun, when present in one, makes day and night, and the divisions of time, respectively equal in duration to those which he produces when present in the other. Such signs are also said to behold each other, as well for the foregoing reasons, as because each of them rises from one and the same part of the horizon, and sets in one and the same part." [12]

Abu Ma'shar gives us a little different perspective by also telling us that while Gemini and Leo are equal in power, Gemini obeys Leo.

"It may be said of the signs that are direct and oblique in rising that one of them obeys another in the other way; for example, that Gemini obeys (sees) Leo, Taurus Virgo, Pisces Scorpio, and Aquarius Sagittarius. [13] ... As for Aries obeying Libra, and Capricorn, Cancer, even if one of the two obeys its companion, neither pair of them indicates agreement and friendship because of their being in opposition to each other." [14]

Abu Ma'shar gives us those zoidia that are of short ascension (direct) as obeying those of long (oblique) ascension. [15] Paulus is very precise also in distinguishing those zoidia that are just 'seeing' and those that 'perceive'. You probably notice that Paulus' relationships of 'seeing' and 'perceiving' are reversed in the lower half of the zodiac. It is most likely that this 'seeing/perceiving' relationship represents the true realities of the hemispheres. In our northern hemisphere Pisces is of short or direct ascension, however if you are in the southern hemisphere Pisces is of long or oblique ascension. Thus Pisces 'perceives' or commands and Scorpio (short ascension in the southern hemisphere) 'sees' or obeys.

I think too, that perhaps the terms 'command' and 'obey' are a little misleading. In the military you have a clear 'command and obey' relationship. However here we have more of a business relationship or partnership. In a large company you may have several department heads or in a law firm you may

have senior partners. These heads are on equal authority but there is a co-operation that exists because they are working towards a common goal for the company. In the company I work for in the ship industry, we have heads of engineering, heads of design, heads of specifications and heads of production etc. It is not unusual that the head of engineering needs the principle drawings from the design department head. In order to produce a ship on time, the formers' need becomes a 'command' that the latter 'yields' to in order for a harmonious functioning in the company. Both have 'equal' authority but there is this sense of need and yielding. And this is the relationship that the zoidia that see and perceive have to each other. In successful close personal relationships there exists this same familiarity.

Paulus describes the effects of such a relationship by saying,
"The zoidia which see one another contribute to sympathy and friendship and goodwill . . . They harmonise also for every association and things resembling these." [16]

Now if most of you are like me, while enjoying and appreciating perhaps, the more 'romanticist' symbolism in this, I like to see the practical application. It is the practical application that brings us to the heart of the whole purpose in the concept of the 'living signs' and that is perfecting the function of the planets that may be positioned there.

Going back to Paulus, he gives a clearer purpose for this familiarity between zoidia when he states,

"And while (on the one hand) the side of a triangle [the trine aspect] is harmonious and harmless, that of the square (on the other hand) makes the result of the final outcome discordant and irregular. The hexagon [the sextile aspect], if found in zoidia which hear or see one another [I'll come to the 'hearing' zoidia further in this essay], has the power of a triangle, but when in other zoidia [is only] half [as powerful]." [17]

Basically what we have in this statement is the idea that the familiar relationship the zoidiahave to each other could significantly strengthen the effect of the aspects between the planets posited there. The sextile between Gemini and Leo was greatly increased in strength as compared to the sextile between Leo and Libra. In fact the relation between Leo and Libra half reduced the sextiles efficiency. This is quite similar in fact, to the result of a harmonious work environment on the job being conducive to higher productivity.

As an example, if you had the Moon posited at 12° Leo and the Sun was at 15° Gemini, the Moon is applying a sextile aspect to the Sun. In this case, however, the Moon would appear to have some difficulty in functioning, as in the domicile of the Sun she is lacking any essential dignity. You would have the same results if you invited a total stranger off the street to run your household and family and take care of your financial affairs while you took the week away from home. In order for her to regain some dignity here she would need to be received by the lord of this domicile. She is, by the sextile aspect from the Sun to some degree, although the sextile is the weakest of the favourable aspects and the Sun is also without appreciable dignity in Gemini. Applying the aforesaid 'familiarity' between the zoidia, there is already a stronger mutual friendship and the sextile is made into the strength of a Trine. There is less demand on the planets themselves to be dignified. Since the Sun is in Gemini, the yielding partner, then the Moon is receiving considerably more support in her position, thus the zoidia themselves contribute to the planets effectiveness.

Ptolemy gives us another example of how zoidia that see and obey can increase the effectiveness of the planets. In chapter 14 of the third book in Tetrabiblos, he is discussing the number of modes of a

prorogation [a primary direction] and tells us that certain degrees are anærectic (destroyers) to significators. These are degrees for example that the malefics may cast their rays (aspects) to and to which the significator may be directed. He says,

"But in the prorogation made into succeeding signs, the places of the malefics, Saturn and Mars, are anærectic, whether meeting the prorogator bodily, or by emission of rays in quartile, from either side, or in opposition;"

The trine and sextile aspect could cause problems but were not usually deadly except in one situation, namely when the malefic was in a sign that "sees and obeys" the sign where his ray fell.

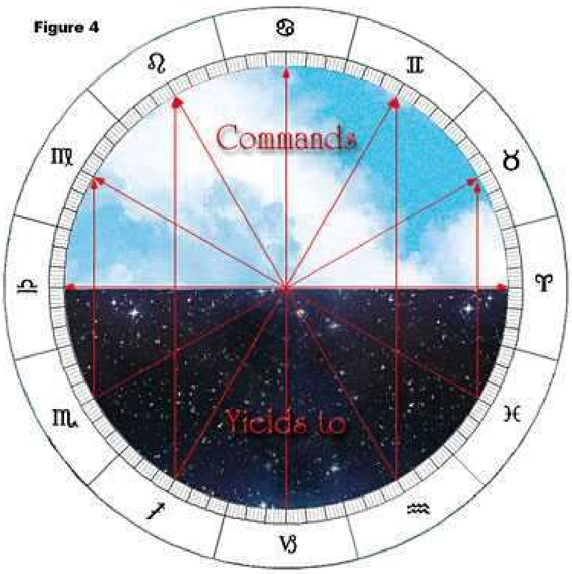
"They are sometimes anærectic by sextile ray, if in a sign of equal power, obeying or beholding the sign of the prorogator."

In this particular case then the effectiveness of these zoidia works contrary to the good of an individual. The effectiveness is then indiscriminate to the planets and what they signify will be increased in efficacy whether for good or ill.

So one attribute or characteristic of the 'living' zoidia is that they have sight. Let's move on and see if we can discover others.

A Quality of 'Life' – Hearing

Sight is by far the most used sense perception we have and the one we rely on the most. However, as those who are sight-impaired can tell you, hearing is a sense perception that we undervalue. Hearing becomes especially important when we lose our ability to see. Thezoidia also have this ability to *hear* each other. [Figure 4]



"Similarly, one must come to an understanding of the hexagonal hearing and seeing zoidia by means of ascensions, thusly. For example, Pisces looks at Taurus. For the second zone, the ascensions of 6 zoidia from Pisces becomes 160, and from Taurus to Libra 200. Pisces becomes less than Taurus and hears it. And the ascensions of the 2 zoidia amount to 360." [18]

"The commanding zoidia have this order: Taurus commands Pisces and Pisces obeys it, Gemini commands Aquarius, Cancer Capricorn, Leo Sagittarius, Virgo Scorpio." [19]

These zoidia have an unequal but cooperative relationship with each other. Valens calls them 'hearing and seeing zoidia' and they are equally distant from the equinoctial zoidia. This relationship is also based on the diurnal arc of the zoidia.

Zoidia	♈	♉	♊	♋	♌	♍	♎	♏	♐	♑	♒	♓
Diurnal Arc	180°	200°	212°	216°	212°	200°	180°	160°	148°	144°	148°	160°

The Zoidia 'seeing' AND 'hearing'

Once again if we look at the table of diurnal arcs we see for example that Taurus has a diurnal arc of 200° and Pisces has one of 160°. Together they equal 360°, the complete circumference of the zodiac. This is a little different relationship than we saw previously where both zoidia had equal authority. We also have the sense of sight here, as these zoidiaalso have a relation by aspect, only here we have a stronger sense of authority and compliance. In our previous example was also compliance but it was based on a common purpose and good will. In this case it isn't just a question of good will but of service. If we digress to my previous analogy in the business place, here we have the department head and his subordinate. A department head isn't a head unless he has a body under him, and that is those who perform the task required so he can be free to do the things that only he can do. It's called delegating responsibility. In order for the department head to effectively do his job he needs a complimentary staff: together they get the job done. As any good leader knows, in this kind of relationship familiarity can easily breed contempt, so there is a certain respectful distance between the two. I liked very much the way Curtis Manwaring describes this relationship.

"It may also be that if a planet-pair is on this commanding-obeying axis, then the commanding planet may represent the subject matter and the obeying planet, the outcome." [20]

As with the zoidia that 'see and perceive', these that 'see and hear' also produce effective results. The sextile between Taurus and Pisces and Virgo and Scorpio are especially benefited from this relationship as Paulus told us, "if found in zoidia which hear or see one another."So here as above, the same rule applies and these sextiles take on the characteristics of a trine.

If you'll study closely the table of diurnal arcs, you'll notice that Pisces is not the only 'complementary' zoidion to Taurus, so is Scorpio. This presents us with some very interesting insights into the nature of oppositions, which I will discuss later. Following is a table that I've made to represent these relationships.

Table 2

Sign Pairs	♈ - ♎	♉ - ♓	♉ - ♏	♊ - ♒	♊ - ♐	♋ - ♑	♌ - ♐	♌ - ♒	♍ - ♏	♍ - ♓
Relationship	On equal terms	♉ orders ♓ obeys	♉ orders ♏ obeys	♊ orders ♒ obeys	♊ orders ♐ obeys	♋ orders ♑ obeys	♌ orders ♐ obeys	♌ orders ♒ obeys	♍ orders ♏ obeys	♍ orders ♓ obeys

As I said earlier in this series, the zoidiathat do not behold or see each other are in aversion [or inconjunct] to each other. This was one of the worse things that could happen to a planet, to fall in a zoidion that was in aversion to its domicile zoidion. It was called falling amiss. A planet falling amiss from its own domicile could not for example receive or a help a planet that might be posited there. But equally as bad, that planet could not run the affairs of the 'topical' responsibilities of its zoidion. If, for example, Libra marked the ascendant

and its lord Venus fell in Taurus/8th zoidion, then Venus was in fact 'blind' and the ascendant [or horoskopos], like the helm of a boat as it was called, would lack an effective 'helmsman' to steer the ship. I don't know about anyone else, but having a 'blind' helmsman doesn't inspire a lot of confidence in me that the ship will arrive safely to port. Valens makes a statement in Book I of his Anthology that is rather important. He is specifically discussing the nature of the zoidia and says,

"And all things that the ruler is at times accustomed to produce by its own nature, whether good or base, or lesser or greater, each one of the zoidia will also produce according to whether the figure description of its ruler is operative or unprofitable." [21]

The 'figure description of its ruler' is simply whether or not the zoidion, where the ruler is posited, can or cannot 'see' the ruler's domicile. This infers that it's not necessary for the lord of the zoidion to be in his domicile for the sign to effectively function, but in order to be 'operative' he must see it. The zoidion[and thus the 'house' or 'affairs of life' which were the responsibility of that zoidion] became dysfunctional and adverse when the 'lord' could not see it. This was a serious situation, as "the stars found in these zoidia [in aversion] became inharmonious. And sometimes they bring about hostile conditions, sometimes separations and banishments." [22] If the ruler of the 10th was in aversion to it, then it would be very difficult to find a 'harmonious' integration of one's actions in regards to one's career for example.

History is replete with examples of people with serious impediments and dysfunctions who, in spite of their handicap, have made considerable contributions to society and mankind in general. The dysfunction, where overcome, was made an incredible strength. And likewise we find its parallel within the relationships of the zodia. In astrology, as in life, zoidia in aversion could overcome an aversion through the use of other 'senses'.

A Sharpened Sense of Hearing and Touch

There are then four conditions of the zoidia that mitigate aversion and we can well liken them to the conditions that exist when we are physically blind.

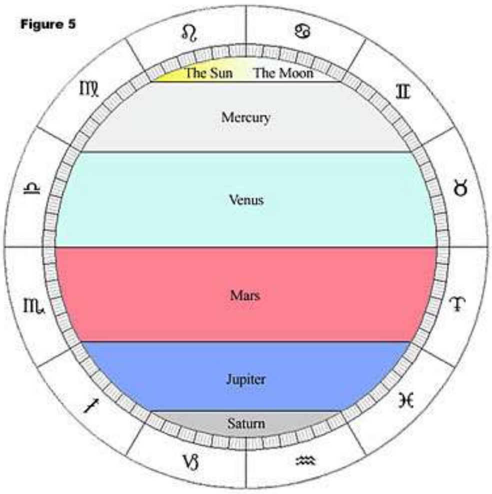
The first of these conditions were zoidia who were in aversion, or 'blind', but had the same lord or ruler. If you look at figure 5, we find that Cancer and Leo, Taurus and Libra, Scorpio and Aries, and Aquarius and Capricorn are all in aversion to one another. According to all the earlier writers, however, this aversion could be mitigated and made strength. [see figure 5]

"[Aspectual connection between] signs in the ecliptic is true for every two signs that are the domiciles of one planet, such as Aries and Scorpio [that belong] to Mars, Taurus and Libra [that belong] to Venus, Gemini and Virgo [that belong] to Mercury, Sagittarius and Pisces [that belong] to Jupiter, Capricorn and Aquarius [that belong] to Saturn. Even though the Moon has [only] one domicile and the Sun has [only] one domicile, as they are both rulers,[23] the domiciles are considered as belonging to one ruler." [24]

"Of them there are those 'agreeing in the path', namely the pairs of signs which belong to one planet, such as Capricorn and Aquarius to Saturn, and Sagittarius and Pisces to Jupiter."[25]

"Abu Ma'shar has called the two signs which have the same presiding planet as concordant in itinerary. It is a relation which must be considered." [26]

Figure 5



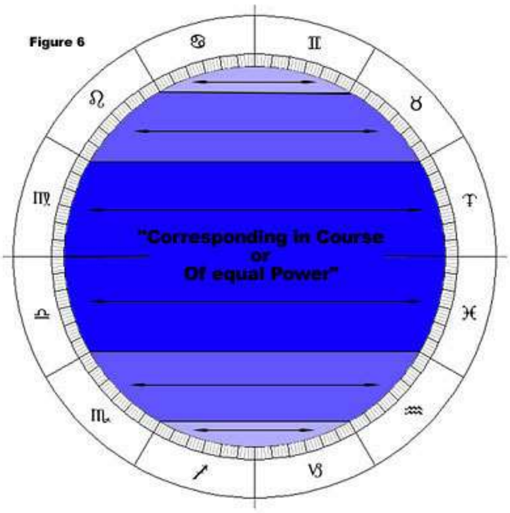
I hope all you women can appreciate the significance of this arrangement between the Sun and Moon! Ibn-Ezra certainly did, "as they are both rulers, the domiciles are considered as belonging to one ruler".Not only are these two signs not in aversion, but also the lord and lady [Sun and Moon] is one and the same ruler. In fact here we may have full equal rights. The Moon is fully familiar with Leo, just as the Sun is fully familiar with Cancer. There was a mutual respect, as if they were one ruler! If we continue this logic to its natural conclusion, it's difficult to say then that the Sun is without dignity in Cancer and just as difficult to say the Moon is without dignity in Leo, as these zoidia were seen as having one ruler, a joint rulership. I'm not going to go into it here but this does raise some interesting insights into how sect should function.

Both Schmidt and Greenbaum have translated this relationship as 'like-engirdling' and the like-engirding zoidia are: Leo and Cancer because of the Sun and Moon, Gemini and Virgo have Mercury representing them, Taurus and Libra whom Venus represents, Aries and Scorpio with Mars representing them, Sagittarius and Pisces because of Jupiter and Capricorn and Aquarius because Saturn represents them.

Before I go into just how these relationships are advantageous, I'd like to finish presenting all of the various conditions that could mitigate an aversion.

Zoidia Corresponding In Course – Antiscia

The next relationship we meet is one with which many who deal with horary questions are familiar. That is zoidia that are "Corresponding in Course" or "Of Equal Power" [Figure 6]. In other words, these are signs that are equidistant from the solstice points 0° Cancer and 0° Capricorn, and relate to the length of time during which a degree (or moira [27]) of the zodiac is above or below the horizon. This is of course relating to antiscia. Antiscia are points or degrees symmetrical to the solstice points. In the Northern hemisphere 0° Cancer is above the horizon for the greatest amount of time each day while 0° Capricorn is above the horizon the least amount of time. This reverses in the Southern hemisphere. In either hemisphere 1° Gemini and 29° Cancer are 29° from 0° Cancer just as 29° Gemini and 1° Cancer are both 1° from 0° Cancer. They have corresponding inverse degrees and so have equal light as they spend the same amount of time above (or below) the horizon. The signs that have equal light are Gemini and Cancer (in aversion), Taurus and Leo, Aries and Virgo (in aversion), Pisces and Libra (in aversion), Aquarius and Scorpio, Capricorn and Sagittarius (in aversion).



"Two signs revolving in the same parallel, North or South (equidistant from a Solstice) are described as corresponding in course (in itinerary), their day hours are equal as are their night hours, and their ascensions are identical at the equator, such as Gemini and Cancer, Taurus and Leo. The correspondence is also by inverse degrees, the beginning of Cancer corresponding to the end of Gemini, and the tenth of the former to the twentieth of the latter." [28]

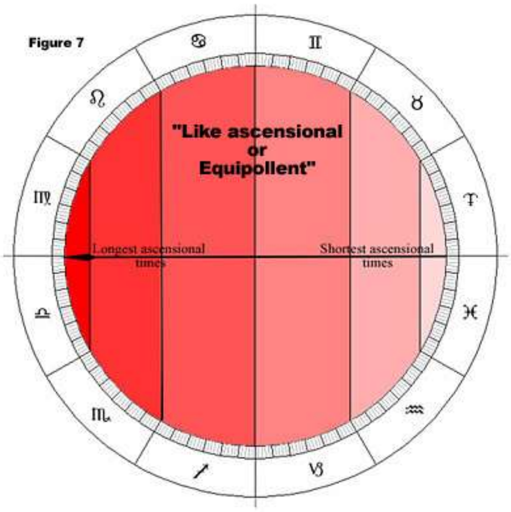
"Six of these signs are direct in rising; these are from the beginning of Cancer to the end of Sagittarius. Six are oblique in rising; these are from the beginning of Capricorn to the end of Gemini...Two signs indicate agreement and friendship, for example Gemini and Cancer, Taurus and Leo and the others like these. Those agreeing in the length of daylight are said to be powerful agreeing in power."[29]

"Those of the same strength are the sign whose crooked [temporal] hours are equal, like Cancer and Gemini, Taurus and Leo, Aries and Virgo, Pisces and Libra, Aquarius and Scorpio, Capricorn and Sagittarius." [30]

Equally Ascending and Equipollent Zoidia – Contra-antiscia

The last two conditions are related, and contain a familiarity between the same zoidia. These zoidia are of equal ascension and they are likewise equidistant from the equinoctial points of 0° Aries and 0° Libra. The latter was referred to as "equipollent". [Figure 7] The equally rising zoidia and equipollent zoidia are Aries and Pisces (in aversion), Taurus and Aquarius, Gemini and Capricorn (in aversion), Cancer and Sagittarius (in aversion), Leo and Scorpio, Virgo and Libra (in aversion).

'Equipollent' is referring to the fact that at 0° Aries and 0° Libra the night hours are equal the day hours. This relation remains constant as you move away from the equinox by inverse degrees. So at 1° Aries the daylight hours are equal the night hours at 29° Pisces just as at 29° Aries the daylight hours are equal the night hours at 1° Pisces. This later became known as contra-antiscia. [Compare this similarity with 'Like in Course' whose daylight hours and nocturnal hours were equal at all points.]



"Any two signs configurated with each other at an equal distance from the same, or from either equinoctial point, are termed commanding and obeying, because the ascensional and descensional times of the one are equal to those of the other, and both describes equal parallels." [31]

"Of them (as may be said of each pair of them) there are those 'agreeing in the zodiac-belt', namely, the pairs which are equal in their rising times such as Aries and Pisces, Taurus and Aquarius, Capricorn and Gemini and the others which follow this." [32]

"Two signs equidistant from an equinoctial point are said to be equipollent, because the day hours of each are equal to the night hours of the other, and their ascensions are equal in all places, such as Aries and Pisces, Taurus and Aquarius, etc. The correspondence is by inverse degrees (contra-antiscia), one being north the other south, the 1st of Aries being equal to the 29th of Pisces and the 10th (of Aries) to the 20th (of Pisces)." [33]

"The signs in the summer semicircle are commanding; those in the winter semicircle, obeying: for when the Sun is present in the former, he makes the day longer than the night; and when in the latter, he produces the contrary effect." [34]

"Those whose ascension [time] is equal are Aries and Pisces, Virgo and Libra, Taurus and Aquarius, Leo and Scorpio, Gemini and Capricorn, Cancer and Sagittarius." [35]"A planet in one of the even [temporal hours] signs is called the master [commanding] and the one in the opposite degree in one of the crooked signs is the slave [obeying]." [36]

In this particular familiarity between the signs we also find the aspect of 'hearing'. As mentioned by the earlier authors, one sign 'commands' and one sign 'obeys' based on 'temporal signs' [summer signs] and 'crooked signs' [winter signs]. While these signs cannot 'see' one another they sense one another and are familiar with one another through what I would compare to a sense of 'touch'. Likewise these samezoidia also possess a sense of hearing.

The Mitigation of Aversion

"All signs, between which there does not exist any familiarity in any of the modes above specified, are inconjunct and separated." [37]

Although Ptolemy did not include zoidia which were 'like-engirdling' many other authors did, and his statement is nonetheless valid. Being 'familiar' was not just aspectual, as we have seen; it was also based on other astronomical association, whether of equal ascension, equal diurnal hours or where diurnal hours were

equal to nocturnal etc. We have in our Zodiac 24 pairs of inconjunct zoidia and through 'familiarity' 12 of them are mitigated. Following is a table that lists these.

Table of Pairs of Mitigated Aversion

	♈	♉	♊	♋	♌	♍	♎	♏	♐	♑	♒	♓
♈						Mitigated: Like in Course		Mitigated Like - engirdling				Mitigated Like - ascension
♉							Mitigated Like - engirdling					
♊				Mitigated: Like in Course						Mitigated Like - ascension		
♋			Mitigated: Like in Course		Mitigated Like - engirdling				Mitigated Like - ascension			
♌				Mitigated Like - engirdling								
♍	Mitigated: Like in Course						Mitigated Like - ascension					
♎		Mitigated Like - engirdling				Mitigated Like - ascension						Mitigated: Like in Course
♏	Mitigated Like - engirdling											
♐				Mitigated Like - ascension						Mitigated: Like in Course		
♑			Mitigated Like - ascension						Mitigated: Like in Course		Mitigated Like - engirdling	
♒										Mitigated Like - engirdling		
♓	Mitigated Like - ascension						Mitigated: Like in Course					

Paulus in his Introductory Matters, gives us some insight into just how this mitigation works.

"And those neighbouring to themselves have sympathy for one another just as if they were placed in the same domicile, while those zoidia 6, 8, or 12 intervals away have power just as if they were in diametrical position. The equally-ascending zoidia which are adjacent to each other likewise will exert the same power on each other as has been said, as if they were positioned in like-engirdling or similar configuration." [38]

While Paulus does not explicitly list the antiscia zoidia, other later authors certainly do, but Paulus nevertheless does leave us with the feeling that these two are not the only such configurations, as he ends this chapter by saying "or other similar configurations".

Paulus tells us that "And those neighbouring to themselves have sympathy for one another just as if they were placed in the same domicile". That is, they are similar to a conjunction. You may feel some confusion in his next statement however when he says, "while those zoidia 6, 8, or 12 intervals away have power just as if they were in diametrical position". This may seem that it doesn't make sense. If you consider Pisces, for example, has Aries (2), Leo (6), Libra (8) and Aquarius (12) in aversion to itself. The aversion with Aries is mitigated because they are equally-ascending and the aversion with Libra is mitigated because they are of

equal-light (antiscia). So by his explanation, a planet in Pisces should be"as if they were placed in the same domicile" [or conjunct] with another placed in Aries. Libra being in the 8th position from Pisces would "have power just as if they were in diametrical position" or behave as if in opposition. These are so far clear, but the confusion arises if you consider Aries has these zoidia in aversion to it: Taurus (2), Virgo (6), Scorpio (8) and Pisces (12). The aversion with Virgo is mitigated because they have equal-light; with Scorpio because they have the same ruler, Mars, and are like-engirdling. These two according to Paulus should have the power of the opposition. What about Pisces? His list says it should be like an opposition. There appears to be some ambiguity here. I say this because he clearly states "those [plural, like Aries/Pisces] neighbouring to themselves [plural] have sympathy for one another just as if they [the plural again] were placed in the same domicile." and again at the end of his chapter he re-affirms this by saying, "The equally ascending Zoidia which are adjacent to each other, likewise will exert the same power on each other." This is specifically talking about Aries and Pisces or Libra and Virgo, "or similar configurations." So it is perhaps difficult to see the consistency of logic in being in conjunct on one side but opposition on the other.

The only way this arrangement can make sense is that Paulus also in the same chapter says, "the power being more for those averse zoidia, which are like-engirdling and equally ascending, which come to be active this way by position on the right". In other words, the relation is more powerful from Pisces to Aries (Pisces being on the right of Aries) than Aries to Pisces (Aries being on the left of Pisces). That is to say a sinister aspect, one that looks forward in the order of the zodiac, is more powerful than one that looks back, or is dexter. This is consistent with the Greek concept of 'seeing' and 'perceiving', but is the opposite of medieval tradition, which considered the dexter as superior to the sinister. But it's important to remember that here we are talking about aspects from zoidia and not planets. The medieval tradition lays more significance to the aspects of the planets than those of the zoidia. In both Hellenistic and later traditions, it was more propitious for Saturn, Jupiter and Mars to be oriental of the Sun. The Sun would then be casting its rays against the order of the zodiac in dexter aspect to these slower planets (a lighter planet always aspects a heavier or slower one). Likewise it was better for Mercury and Venus to be occidental of the Sun, because, since they were lighter, they would cast their rays against the order of the zodiac, or in dexter aspect to the Sun. So it is a significant point to notice that the activity of the zoidia was not quite the same as that of the planets.

This noticeable difference of aspects between the zoidia and aspects between the planets raises another question: that of the power of the aspects. For example, just what is the power of the opposition? Olympiodorus who was a commentator of Paulus' work says:

"And in the same way also, the seven stars, if they should be unconnected with one another, they are most evil...But again one must consider this also, even if the stars are unconnected, whether they are actually in like-engirdling or equally ascending zoidia. For thus the evil is moderated." [39]

Here we have explained to us that 'the power of the opposition' found in the equally ascending zoidia of Gemini and Capricorn for example, moderates any evil as a result of their being inconjunct.

There are a couple of possibilities I can think of which may explain why this is so:

1.We are speaking 'relatively'. The Inconjunction was the worse that could happen, so an opposition was preferable to that, like the lesser of two evils. It at least brought the planet back into the workings of the whole chart.

2.The concept perhaps is closer to the Arabic model, where Abu Ma'shar calls the inconjunct relation of Gemini-Capricorn for example, as being a 'natural opposition' because it is closest to being an opposition in nature, so that the equally-ascending signs are in fact moderating an opposition as they do the square aspect between the like-ascending signs of Taurus and Aquarius. [40] Or,

3. There is something more to the opposition between zoidia than just merely being 'inimical' as it is called.

The first proposition is an obvious one and of course true in the sense that it is better to find all the planets active and participating. Although one might argue that an opposition brings just as many problems and maybe it would have been better not to create new ones.

I question the reasoning of the second proposition as presented by Al-Biruni quoting Abu Ma'shar. *Zoidia* that are equally ascending and 'like in course' as he calls them, are based on the relationship of inverse degrees. If one were to look at the angle between 1° Aries and 29° Virgo, then yes they are almost 180°. Just as valid though, if you look at the angle between 1° Virgo and 29° Aries, they are closer to a trine. So who is to say that the inconjunct between these two *zoidia* isn't that of a 'natural trine'? The degrees in each sign in their natural order are always and at all points 150° from each other and therefore at all times inconjunct and neither a 'natural opposition' nor 'natural trine'. So I have the least amount of faith in this proposition.

This brings me to the third proposition. Are there really so many inconsistencies, or am I missing something? Is the opposition truly inimical or is it something else? To answer this, I think we have to go back to what this thesis is proposing; and that is that the *zoidia*, independent from the planets, have their own "life" in regards to each other and that the result of this life creates an environment for the planets to function in and produce their results. Two individual 'eco-systems' that are interdependent.

If you go back and examine the figures for the 'seeing and hearing' *zoidia* (figures 1,3,4) you'll find that all the figure descriptions are either sextile, trine or oppositions. They are all constructive and beneficial and every opposition is represented. In comparison looking at the figures which describe the mitigation of aversion (figures 5,6 and 7) you'll see these are the very difficult relations for the *zoidia* and they are all either inconjunct or squares. Perhaps then, these figure descriptions between the *zoidia*, are in fact truly representing what is beneficial and what is not between them, that the relationships they have to each other are inherently different than those the planets have to each other and that they have an effect on the 'life role' that the planets have amongst themselves.

I find some support for this in *Valens Anthology Book I*, where he is very careful to delineate the co-mixture of the planets separate from the *zoidia*. He tells us in chapter 20:

"For, I did not want to compile commixtures at great length and with many subdivisions.The synoptic manner, then, which is easily taken in at a glance from the natural activity of each star AND zoidion, will be preferred by those who can see." [41]



What is clear from Valens' statement is that there is a 'natural activity' of the stars [planets] and a 'natural activity' of the *zoidia*. These are two distinct activities, which are not necessarily the same.

Dorotheus of Sidon in his writings in***Carmen Astrologicum*** also takes great pains to separate the aspects between planets and influence of the*zoidia*. He discusses each on its own terms and a look at the table of contents makes this very clear.

- Aspects of trines, If one of the planets aspects another from trine
- Quartile [aspect]
- On the planets aspect from opposition
- Aspect of the planets from sextile
- If Saturn is with one of the seven
- If Jupiter is with one of the seven

After explaining planetary aspects he then explains the importance of their placement in thezoidia in relation to the ascendant zoidion.

- Knowledge of the places of the planets
- Arrival of the Moon in the Places
- Arrival of the Sun in the Places
- Arrival of Saturn in the Places etc.

He then gets a little more specific and goes so far as to explain how each planet reacts in the different zoidia based on domicile.

- Arrival of Saturn in another's house
- Arrival of Jupiter in another's house
- Arrival of Mars in another's house
- He goes through each of the planets and ends: On the arrival of the planets, one of them in the house of another.

So I repeat, it certainly seems clear there was a separation of the natural actions of the planets from those of the zoidia.

So is an opposition between zoidia the same as the opposition between planets? I think perhaps this early separation of 'Church and State' if you will, does not make an opposition of zoidia necessarily inimical. It was usually an inimical planet, or a planet made inimical by position or astronomical circumstance, being posited in an opposing zoidion to its own domicile, exaltation or triplicity [detriment or fall] that highlighted the ill-effects of the opposition. Mars in Libra and Saturn in Virgo

might illustrate an example of this. Since Mars is the lighter of the two, he is casting his aspect to Saturn. Saturn is in the 12th from Mars and since the aversion is mitigated being equally-ascending zoidia, then it is as if Mars in its detriment is in opposition to Saturn. Not a very promising aspect. However if Mars were in Virgo and Saturn in Libra, Mars is now casting his aspect forward to Saturn and, since Mars is on the right of Saturn, then this aversion becomes like a conjunction with Saturn in his exaltation. This becomes a totally different relationship and result. If instead of Mars, Venus was in Libra, then the 'mitigated aversion become opposition' would produce yet another result where the opposition has perhaps a more positive effective because of Venus' dignity in her domicile.

I wonder if the fact that the opposition falls among the figures that are helpful and have the greatest potential for effectivity is important. I think in some respects our more modern view of oppositions is perhaps more accurate. We may at times go to the other extreme in fact. What I understand is needed in all of this, is to separate the ideas of opposite zoidia from opposite planets. The truth I think lies in the synthesis of the 'natural activity' of the zoidiaand that of the planets. Which is probably why the early astrologers taught each separately.

We've seen that the zoidia certainly had 'inimical' relations with each other. I think the square being found amongst the figures for inconjunct zoidia is indicative of just how hard a square can be. It's like two people looking at each other but not seeing each other because they are so far apart in ideology, or they can't see [are blind to] each other's point of view. So I would imagine that the squares that are not mitigated by equally-ascending zoidia, or like-engirdling zoidia, or zoidia of like course are extremely hard and among the worst kind of environments to function in along with the zoidia in aversion. [42]

I think this inference is not without precedence. Antiochus of Athens tells us,

"The zoidia, which have sympathy for one another in accordance with a square zodiacal side are these: Taurus to Aquarius, and Leo to Scorpio through equal ascensions. Again Leo to Taurus and Scorpio to Aquarius through equal power. And Gemini to Virgo and Sagittarius to Pisces through like-engirdling. All other squares happen to be useless for sympathy." [43]

It appears to me then that of all the aspects, the opposition is extremely, 'case sensitive'. If we understand that an opposition by zoidia is not necessarily an evil in itself, but rather creates a sensitive environment for the planets to exist and function according to their natures in, then Paulus' statement makes a lot of sense. In fact I wonder if it is a 'misnomer' to say the aspects between zoidia are 'good' or 'bad'. It might be more correct to say that the environment produced by these aspects is more 'conducive to' or 'inimical to' creating a better environment or more difficult environment for planets to work in. To say then that the mitigation of aversion between zoidia is good and constructive is true in that the potential is there. The actuality with regards to the outcome in an individual is how the planets agree or disagree.

It is interesting in this regard to look at the interpretations of the planets in opposition to each other to see that in fact the opposition between zoidia only made something very potent, but it was not necessarily malefic of itself. If we take a couple of examples from Dorotheus, we can quickly see the difference.

"If Saturn aspects the Moon from opposition, it indicates the spoiling of his mother's property and pain and hidden illness and grief and irritation."

"If Jupiter aspects the Moon from opposition while the Moon is western [and] increasing in number

[waxing] [44] then he will be celebrated with respect to his livelihood, a famous man, and he will be one of those who relies on himself and will not obey another." [45]

We can see a clear difference in the effects in these two examples. While the outcomes are totally different, one that is totally unprofitable and one that is profitable, what is common to both is the strength of the effect. In both there is a strong result. What is also common to both is that they are oppositions and the difference in outcome is because of the planets concerned. Dorotheus unfortunately does not give us a description of each planetary pair in opposition but mainly those that were malefic, those from Saturn and Mars and a selected few with the Moon. He does not give us those with Jupiter or Venus or Mercury or the Sun. It is clear however from those he gives us that what makes the opposition hard is the condition and nature of the aspecting planets. It is likewise clear from each example that the opposition is very strong in producing the effects from the planets.

Valens gives us a little more insight into oppositions when he says,

"But we did not comprehend the malefics in a diametrical positioning [opposition] to be harmful in every way for every nativity, but there are times when they are benefic (and especially for notable nativities), unless they are also confounded with many afflictions — **And the diametrical positionings will be judged in accordance with both stars**, one positioning whenever a star should be diametrical to a star while marking the hour, another whenever it should be diametrical in its own house or trigon or exaltation. And when the lords of the trigons or of the sects are opposing themselves, the natives will become the most afflicted and unstable in their livelihood." [46] [Emphasis is mine - SB]

Valens simply tells us that you can't just judge an opposition because it's an opposition, but you have to judge an opposition "in accordance with both stars." One criterion is the positions in relation to the ascendant, and he gives the example of two planets in opposition where one is rising and the other setting. The next criterion he gives is if a planet, from one of his dignities, is opposing another. But he says one of the worst things is if the Triplicity rulers or the sect Lords, the Sun and Moon, should oppose their own domicile. So again I have to emphasise the different natures inherent in zoidia and those of the planets, and I also have to emphasise their interdependence. It wasn't all up to the planets as their positioning in the zoidia changed their condition and it wasn't all up to the zoidia either as the nature of the planets influenced their relationships with each other.